

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 18253 221519Z

47

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 DODE-00 TRSE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OMB-01 SAJ-01

STR-04 CIEP-01 MC-02 /065 W
----- 126207

R 221230Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8074

INFO RUEHDC USDOC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18253

USDOC FOR BEWT/DOWNEY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EEWT, ETRN, ESTC, UR, US

SUBJECT: GVISHIANI PROPOSES DISCUSSIONS ON US-SOVIET COOPERATION
IN AVIATION INDUSTRY

1. DURING MEETING DECEMBER 19 WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DOWNEY AND COMMATT, G.M. GVISHIANI, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ADVISED THAT SOVIETS HAD "NOT LOST INTEREST" IN POSSIBILITY OF COOPERATION WITH U.S. IN AREA OF AVIATION INDUSTRY. GVISHIANI SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BOEING AND LOCKHEED, AND HE NOTED THAT LOCKHEED INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT GEORGE PRILL WAS SCHEDULED TO VISIT MOSCOW IN JANUARY 1976.

2. CONTINUING ALONG THIS LINE, GVISHIANI SAID SOVIETS WERE AWARE OF MILITARY ASPECTS OF US-SOVIET COOPERATION IN AIRCRAFT CONSTRUCTION AND SENSITIVITIES OF U.S. GOVERNMENT. SOVIET AUTHORITIES WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THIS ASPECT, HE ADDED. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF FACT THAT USSR WAS ABOUT TO MAKE A "BASIC DECISION" ON ITS PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT, GVISHIANI SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO ORGANIZE MEETING OF U.S. AND SOVIET DELEGATIONS TO DETERMINE WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COULD BE DONE BETWEEN THE AVIATION INDUSTRIES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES DURING THE COMING PERIOD. IF, FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, IT WERE CLEAR THAT
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 18253 221519Z

NOTHING COULD BE DONE DUE TO MILITARY ASPECTS OF AVIATION

INDUSTRY, BOTH SIDES COULD GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS. HOWEVER, GVISHIANI SAID, IN VIEW OF ENORMOUS RESOURCES WHICH BOTH SIDES WOULD INVEST IN ESSENTIALLY DUPLICATE PROJECTS, IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF ALL POSSIBLE AVENUES FOR COOPERATION WERE NOT EXAMINED. GVISHIANI SUGGESTED THAT U.S. DELEGATION TO SUCH A MEETING SHOULD INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, DEFENSE AND COMMERCE. SOVIET DELEGATION WOULD BE STRUCTURED ALONG SAME LINES.

3. DOWNEY OBSERVED THAT U.S. COMPANIES HAD BEEN INTERESTED IN SELLING AIRCRAFT BUT THAT WE HAD RECENTLY GAINED IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS HAD REJECTED THIS POSSIBILITY. GVISHIANI SAID

THAT SOVIETS HAD INDEED REJECTED POSSIBILITY OF BUYING FIVE OR SIX AIRCRAFT ON GROUND THAT COST OF MAINTAINING THIS SMALL NUMBER OF U.S.-BUILT AIRCRAFT WOULD MORE THAN OUTWEIGH ANY ADVANTAGES OF USING THEM. HOWEVER, MUCH LARGER SOVIET PURCHASES OF AIRCRAFT, COMBINED WITH TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND U.S. PURCHASES OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT (HE MENTIONED NEW YAK-42) WAS STILL OF GREAT INTEREST FOR SOVIETS.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH UNPRECEDENTED IN US-SOVIET PRACTICE, MEETING PROPOSED BY GVISHIANI COULD BE USEFUL IN CLARIFYING EXACTLY WHAT SOVIETS SEE AS QUID PRO QUO FOR THEIR AGREEING TO PURCHASE REALLY SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF U.S. PASSENGER AIRCRAFT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL AVIATION, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW18253
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750444-0338
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751219/aaaaaqlw.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GVISHIANI PROPOSES DISCUSSIONS ON US-SOVIET COOPERATION IN AVIATION INDUSTRY
TAGS: EAIR, EEWT, ETRN, ESTC, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006